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ABSTRACT

The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) is the most recent in a series of longitudinal studies conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics at the United States Department of Education. The NELS:88 began with a baseline assessment of school experiences, with the purpose of relating these experiences to current academic achievement and to later achievement in school and in life. A total of 1,201 schools from 50 states participated in the base-year study. Out of 29,884 students selected, 92.9% responded. Out of 26,410 parents selected, 90.5% responded. The unique features of the NELS:88 and how researchers can use these new features to study educational policy and the effects of education on children are the subjects of this paper. One special feature of the NELS:88 is that it focuses on eighth graders, thus creating a longitudinal data base that will enable researchers to assess the effects of elementary, middle, and junior high school experiences on high school performance and school completion. Both self-reports and teacher and administrator reports are assessed as well as the student's family and home environment. Special sampling procedures and follow-up methods are discussed. Policymakers will be particularly interested in data concerning primary-to-secondary transition patterns, school effectiveness, dropouts, parental involvement, equity of education across minority groups and for at-risk students, cognitive growth, ability grouping and tracking, needs of language minorities, mathematics and science programs, humanities and history programs, and programs for gifted and talented students. Five figures and one data table are included. (TJH)

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The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988: Data Collection Results and Analysis Potential

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March 22, 1989

Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Education Research Association, San Francisco, California, March 27-31, 1989.

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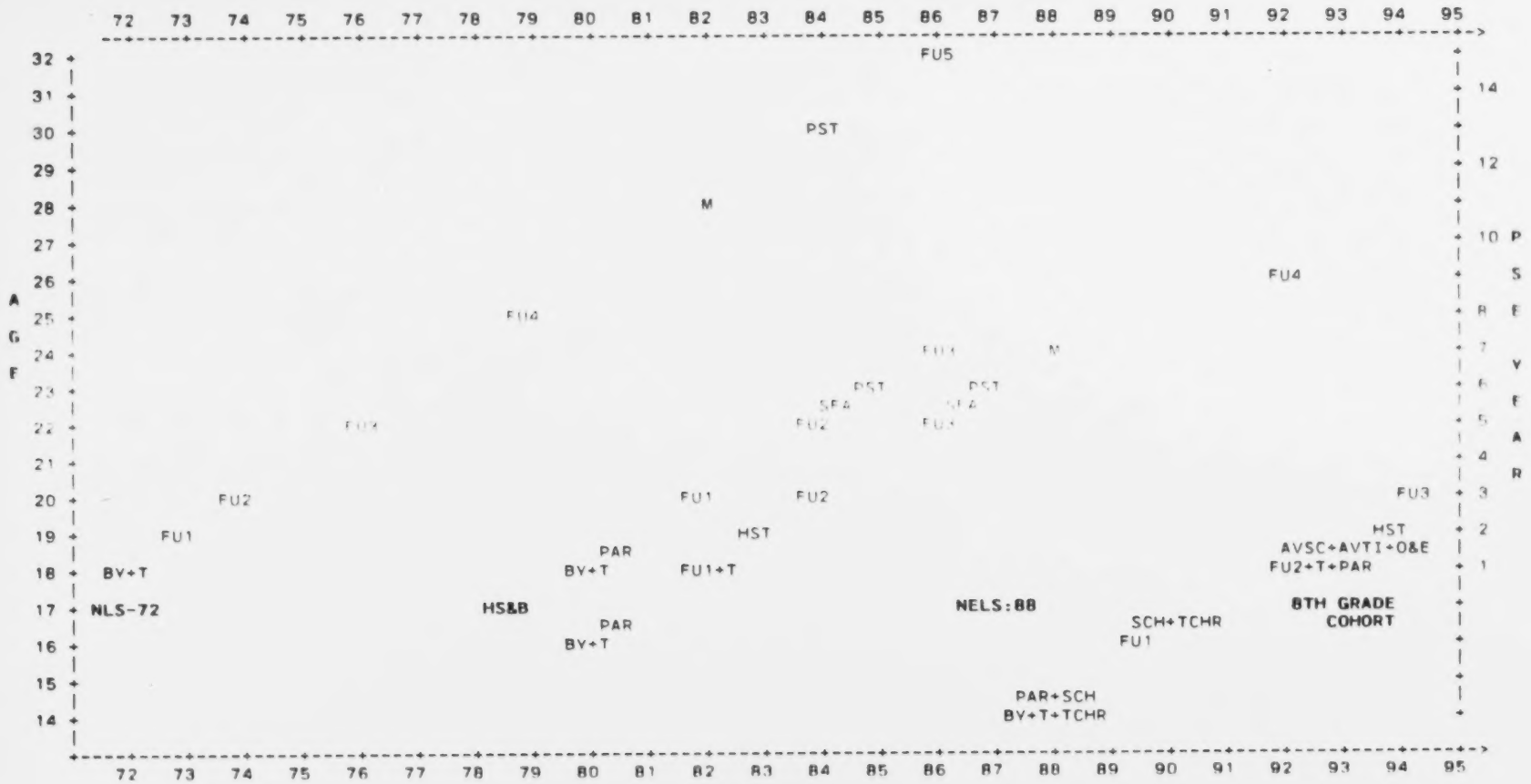
The National Education Longitudinal Study of 1988 (NELS:88) is the most recent in a series of longitudinal studies conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) at the U.S. Department of Education. Like the previous longitudinal education studies, NELS:88 begins with a baseline assessment of school experiences, with the purpose of relating these experiences to current academic achievement and to later achievement in school and in life. However, the study has been designed with a number of enhancements that will increase the analysis and policy-informing potential of the NELS:88 data. In the following sections we will discuss the many unique features of NELS:88 and present several ways in which we think these features will be useful to researchers studying education policy and the effects of education on the future of children. Figure 1 illustrates the place of NELS:88 in the series of NCES sponsored longitudinal education studies.

Like the two preceding longitudinal studies conducted by the NCES, the National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972 and the "High School and Beyond" study of 1980 sophomore and senior cohorts, NELS:88 examines school experiences of a national probability sample of students. A major difference between NELS:88 and the two previous studies is that NELS:88 focuses on eighth graders. One reason for this focus is to create a longitudinal data base that will give researchers the opportunity to study the ways elementary, middle, and junior high school experiences affect high school performance and relate to high school completion. Because NELS:88 begins with eighth graders, a unique feature of the study is that it will provide researchers with baseline data for a representative sample the majority of high school dropouts in this age cohort.

Another unique feature of NELS:88 is its scope. This study is the most ambitious of the NCES longitudinal education studies, casting a wide net to capture several relevant facets of children's eighth grade experiences, in order to relate these experiences to the children's academic achievement.

Diagram 1-1. Research Design for the NCES Longitudinal Studies Program



NLS-72 = National Longitudinal Study of the High School Class of 1972
BY = Base Year Data Collection
T = Cognitive Test Administration
FU1 = First Follow-Up Data Collection
FU2 = Second Follow-Up Data Collection
FU3 = Third Follow-Up Data Collection
HS&B = High School and Beyond: 1980

AVSC = Area Voc School Augmentation
AVTI = Area Voc/Technical Institute Teachers

FU4 = Fourth Follow-Up Data Collection
FU5 = Fifth Follow-Up Data Collection
M = Maintenance of Address Data
PST = Postsecondary Education Transcripts
PAR = Survey of Parents
HST = High School Transcripts
SFA = Student Financial Aid Records
NELS:88 = National Education Longitudinal Study: 1988
TCHR = Survey of Teachers
SCH = School Survey
O&E = Offerings and Enrollments Data

First, the study examines characteristics of the school itself, providing data on admissions and academic policies, school climate, and teacher and student composition. Second, the study examines students' school experiences, both in terms of their own reports and in terms of reports of teachers. The teachers' reports contain substantial detail about classroom instructional practices.

Finally, the study provides data on the student's family and home experiences. This is done first by obtaining students' reports but is supplemented and enhanced by interviewing parents. While the previous longitudinal education studies have obtained some information from teachers and parents for small subsamples of students, NELS:88 provides extensive information from these sources for all students.

The broad coverage provided by NELS:88 of the eighth grader's educational experience has tremendous potential for understanding the effect of that experience on the child's educational achievement. For example, from the NELS data it will be possible to obtain a comprehensive picture of the relationship between students' academic achievement, on the one hand, and their home life, interactions with parents, and their parents' attitudes, support and involvement, on the other. Similarly, the detailed information on classroom experiences will enable researchers to examine the impact of instructional practices on achievement in a nationally representative sample. Finally, an examination of the effects on student achievement of many different school-level structural and policy factors will also be possible. One side benefit of the NELS:88 survey is that the school data itself comprises a nationally representative sample of schools with eighth grades. This sample will be useful to education policy researchers who are concerned with school-level issues, and demonstrates the usefulness of the study above and beyond its utility in understanding the experience of individual students.

The NELS:88 study provides a rich source for exploring a number of important issues relevant to educational policy in the United States. The

remainder of the paper consists of two sections. In the first section we will present the results of the data collection effort. We will discuss coverage and completion rates for the different components of the NELS:88 study, and for various policy-relevant subgroups contained within the sample. In the second section we will discuss and illustrate ways in which the NELS:88 data can be used to address important policy issues in education.

Part I: NELS:88 Base Year Study Data Collection Results

The NELS:88 Base Year Survey is a complex and multi-faceted study involving multiple sources of data. Information relevant to understanding the eighth grader's educational experience was collected from the students themselves, their school administrators, their teachers, and their parents. Figure 2 graphically presents the sources of information and illustrates some of the important types of information collected from each of the sources.

The scope of the NELS:88 Base Year study was large enough to warrant the involvement of two survey organizations in the data collection and processing. NORC was the prime contractor and oversaw the entire data collection process. NORC itself designed the Student and Parent instruments, collected the data for these surveys, and is responsible for the final public use tape preparation and documentation for data from all the sources. The collection of the School and Teacher data was also done by NORC, while Westat developed the instruments for these surveys, collected data from non-respondents, and conducted the data processing.

Coverage and response rates are necessary, though certainly not sufficient, indicators of the quality and usefulness of national surveys such as NELS. Judged by these indicators the NELS:88 Base Year Study is of very high quality. Schools from every state, including Alaska, Hawaii and the District of Columbia, appear in the sample. Figure 3 shows a breakdown of schools by school type. School-level data were collected from over 98% of the schools in the school file.

Figure 2

Illustrative Research Topics from the NELS:88 Study

Determinants of Learning

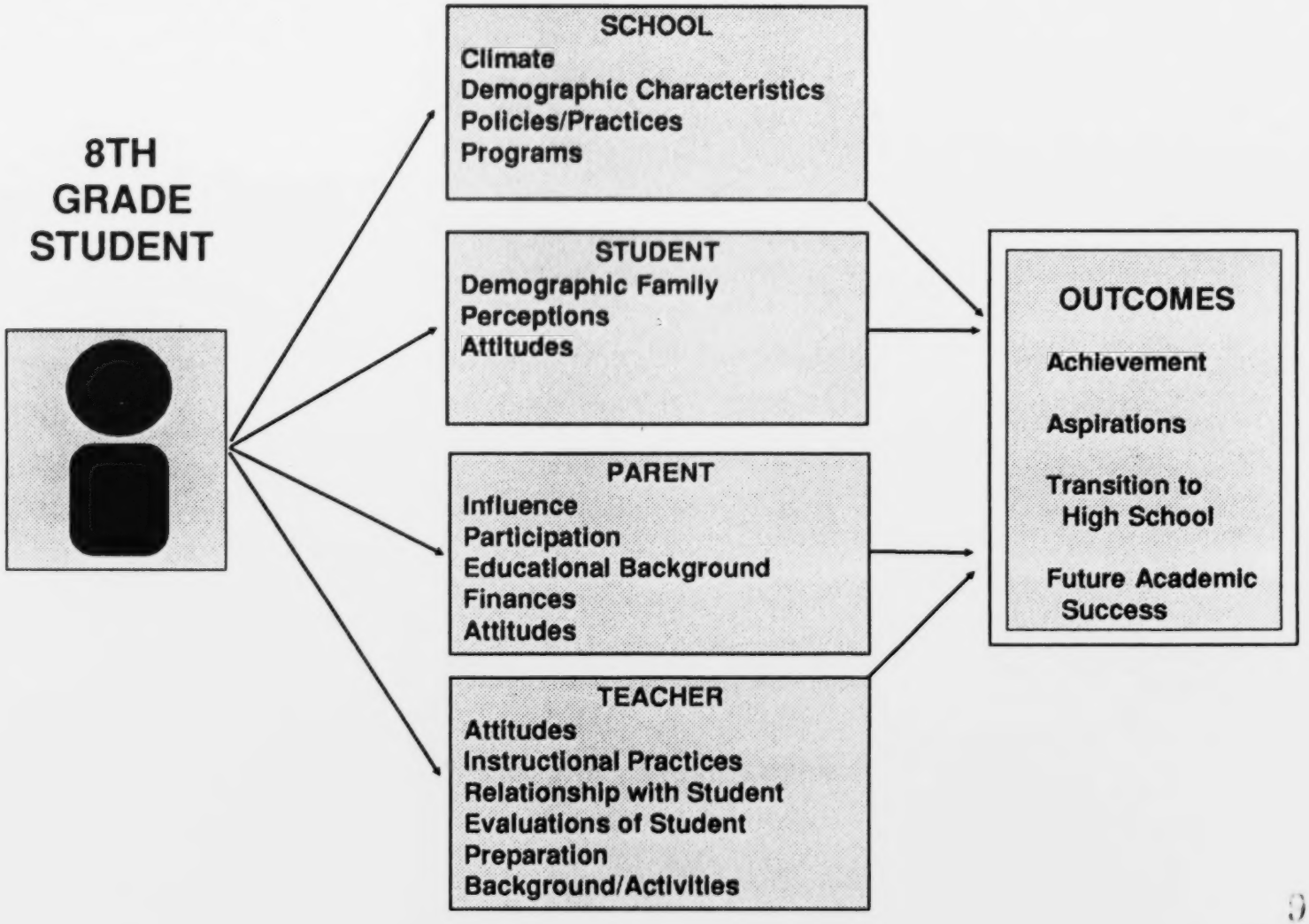
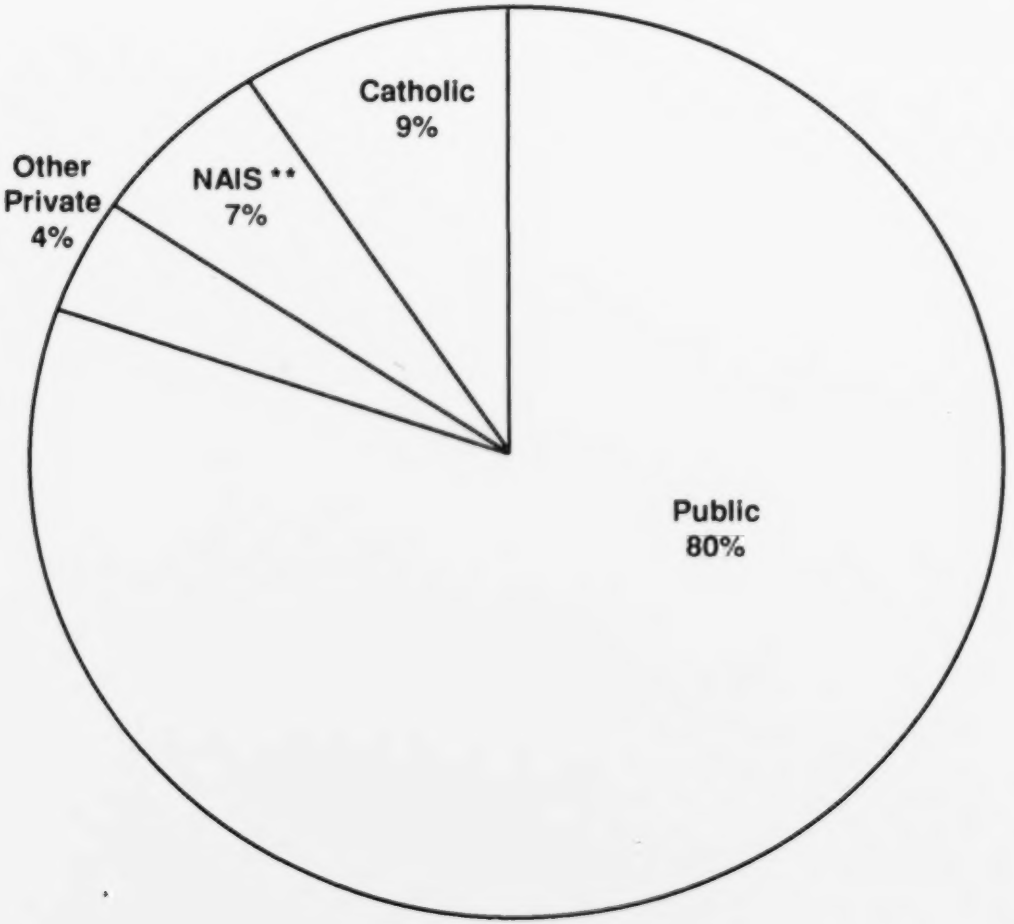


Figure 3

Participating Schools by Type
Base Year Participants *
N = 1201



* Core Participants and Supplements

** National Association of Independent Schools

Coverage and response rates for students, parents, and teachers were also very high. To illustrate student coverage, Figure 4 shows a breakdown of the student sample by certain ethnic subgroups. Table 1 lists response rates for the student and parent surveys. Response rates for the Teacher Survey by the various subgroups are not available at this time. However, the overall response rate was very high. Data from at least one teacher was collected for 92.3% of the students selected into the sample, suggesting that teacher response rates for the subgroups will also be high.

Data Collection Methods

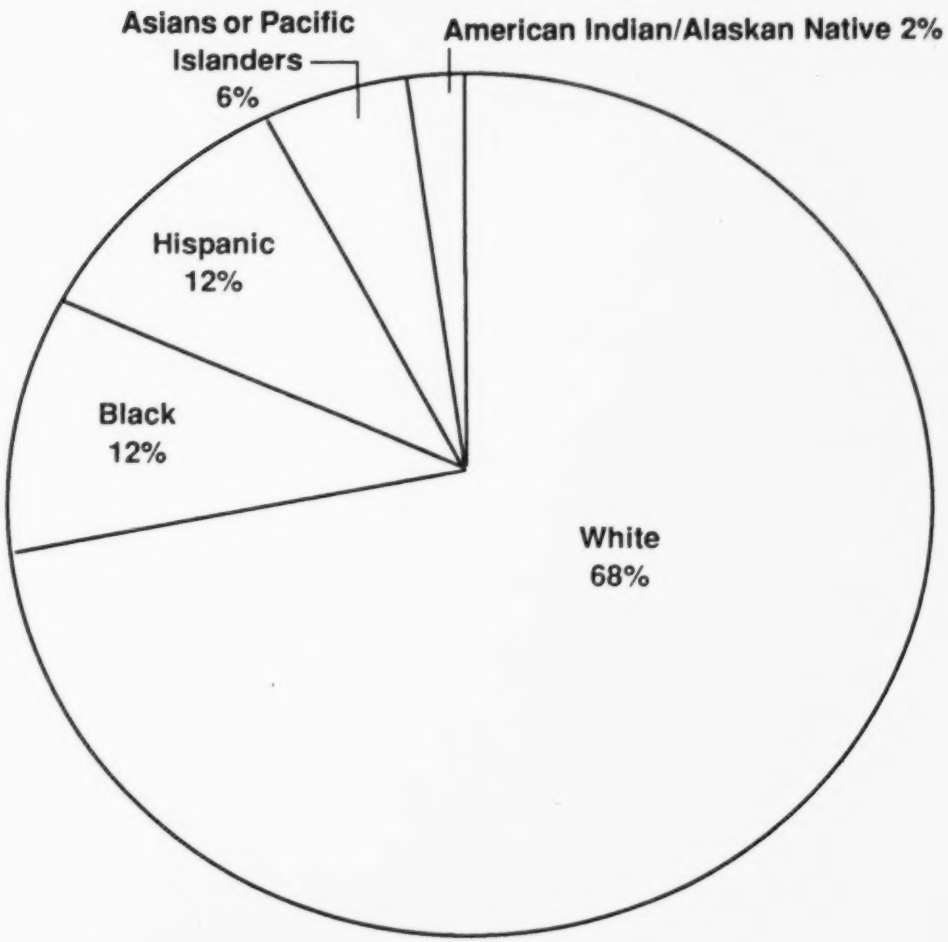
A number of procedures were built into the sampling and data collection stages to create these high levels of coverage and response in the various NELS:88 surveys. Sampling at the school level was designed to ensure that private schools, rural schools, and schools with high minority membership were adequately represented. Additionally, at the request of the Office of Bilingual Education and Minority Language Affairs (OBEMLA), oversamples of students with Hispanic and with Asian or Pacific Island heritage were drawn.

To complement these sampling procedures a number of data collection procedures were implemented to ensure high response rates. For the students, make-up survey days were scheduled at schools for students unable to be present at the original survey day. For the parents, several procedures to collect outstanding questionnaires were used. Each student was given a Parent Questionnaire and a letter requesting parent participation to take home to his or her parent. A pretest showed that this was the most effective method of delivering questionnaires to parents and for obtaining their responses. (Ingels et al., 1987) Parents had the option of sending the completed questionnaire back to the school with their eighth grader or of mailing it directly to NORC in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope.

A mixed mode follow-up design was used in pursuing parents who failed to return a completed questionnaire on their own. Parents first received a

Figure 4

Breakdown of Participants by Ethnicity
Base Year Participants*
N = 28,000 Students



* Core Participants and Supplements

Table 1. Preliminary Unweighted Completion Rates for Total Sample, School Type, and Key Sampling Strata

	STUDENT SURVEY		PARENT SURVEY[1]	
	Number Selected	Percent Responding	Number Selected	Percent Responding
Total	**29,884**	**92.9**	**26,410**	**90.5**
Public	24,309	92.6	21,377	90.0
Catholic	2,732	94.7	2,370	93.1
NAIS[1]	1,768	92.8	1,715	91.1
Other Private	1,075	94.8	948	91.6
ETHNIC OVERSAMPLE				
Hispanic	3,076	91.2	3,062	83.3
Asian/Pacific Islander	1,333	91.9	1,333	86.3
Schools with greater than 19% minority	2,945	90.0	2,934	83.8

Note: These rates may differ slightly from rates presented elsewhere, depending on how the sample is defined. All rates are based on unweighted data, after cleaning. For the analysis overall and by school type the sample was defined as students in the core and state augmentation samples. Data from sample augmentations will not appear on the final public release tapes. When the Christian school augmentation sample is included, the rates increase, however the differences are less than one percent. For the ethnic and high minority analysis the sample is defined as students in the core sample minus those in augmentation schools. This is because the ethnicity and minority status categories were sampling strata when the core sample was drawn. Response rates within the core sample were 93.7 percent for students and 91.4 percent for parents.

[1]National Association of Independent Schools.

telephone prompt from an NORC interviewer encouraging them to complete and return the questionnaire promptly. Between forty and forty-five percent of the approximately 28,000 Parent Questionnaires were returned to NORC either through the schools or directly by mail by the time telephone prompting was completed. Cases still outstanding after prompting were transferred to the NORC field staff. Field interviewers administered the survey to parents by telephone and, in a relatively small number of cases for a survey so large, in person. These procedures were especially effective in gaining compliance of typically hard-to-reach respondents, such as those living in the poorer areas of large cities.

A special effort was made to ensure a high response rate for parents of the students in the OBEMLA oversample. For the Hispanic parents, Spanish-speaking interviewers conducted the prompting and mailed a Spanish language version of the Parent Questionnaire if requested. Additionally, eleven Spanish-speaking interviewers were engaged during the field period and were assigned to households that were identified as Spanish-speaking during the prompting stage. These interviewers often administered the Spanish language questionnaire, either on the telephone or in person.

For the Asian and Pacific Island parents in the sample NORC contracted with ARC, Associates, an educational consulting firm specializing in concerns of Asian and Pacific Island ethnic groups, to develop a multilingual prompting letter in Chinese, Korean, Tagalog, Vietnamese, and English. The letter stressed the importance of the NELS:88 study, encouraged parent participation, and--since native language questionnaires were not available for the Asian and Pacific Island groups-- asked parents to obtain assistance with the English language questionnaire, if necessary. Within two weeks of mailing this letter and a copy of the Parent Questionnaire to the parents of Asian/Pacific Island students, ARC employees, who had signed the NORC confidentiality pledge and who could speak to the parent in his or her native language, telephoned the household. During that contact, the interviewer stressed the importance of the

study and encouraged the respondent to participate. Our tracking statistics suggest that this procedure resulted in an impressive thirteen percent increase in the response rate for the Asian/Pacific Island parents.

Part II: Analytic Utility and Policy Relevance of NELS:88

Analytic Utility of NELS:88

The longitudinal design and general scope of NELS:88 offer several analytic advantages. Four of these advantages--within-cohort comparison, a representative cross-section of eighth graders, a focus on early adolescence, and provision of data for study of trends--were discussed in a paper presented last year in a similar session (Ingels & Owings, 1988). The present paper illustrates the analytic utility of the NELS:88 data by elaborating on the four issues. First, the design of NELS:88 provides for a representative cross-section of eighth graders in the United States. Analysis of data from respondents from all fifty states in the nine census regions, and from a wide array of socio-economic and racial/ethnic groups (including oversamples of Hispanics and Asian/Pacific Islanders) will contribute to the understanding of the demographic and environmental factors that affect educational outcomes such as individual aspirations, school performance, and career choices.

Second, by following the same individuals over time, NELS:88 provides the basis for within-cohort comparison and analysis of change. This gives researchers a national level data set useful for the investigation of conditions under which students' educational choices change over time, the factors (for example, recently mandated stricter educational standards) that explain changes in educational performance of students at the aggregate level, and the causal links between being at risk to drop out and actual dropping out at a later time.

Third, the NELS:88 design focuses on early adolescence, a period in which major changes in attitudes and behaviors occur. It provides a basis for understanding at the national level the impact of curriculum content and

tracking or ability group placement on educational achievement and occupational choices. The focus on a younger cohort also allows for earlier identification of students at risk for dropping out of school.

Fourth, the NELS:88 data, in combination with the other surveys comprising the National Longitudinal Studies Program of the National Center for Education Statistics, presents the opportunity for national level cross-cohort comparative analysis in areas such as course taking and academic performance. By comparing data from subsequent rounds of NELS:88 data with various rounds of its predecessor studies, NLS-72 and HS&B, investigators will be able to assess differences among high school sophomores and seniors attributable to time. Policy analysts can use such comparative data to monitor the quality of education offered by schools.

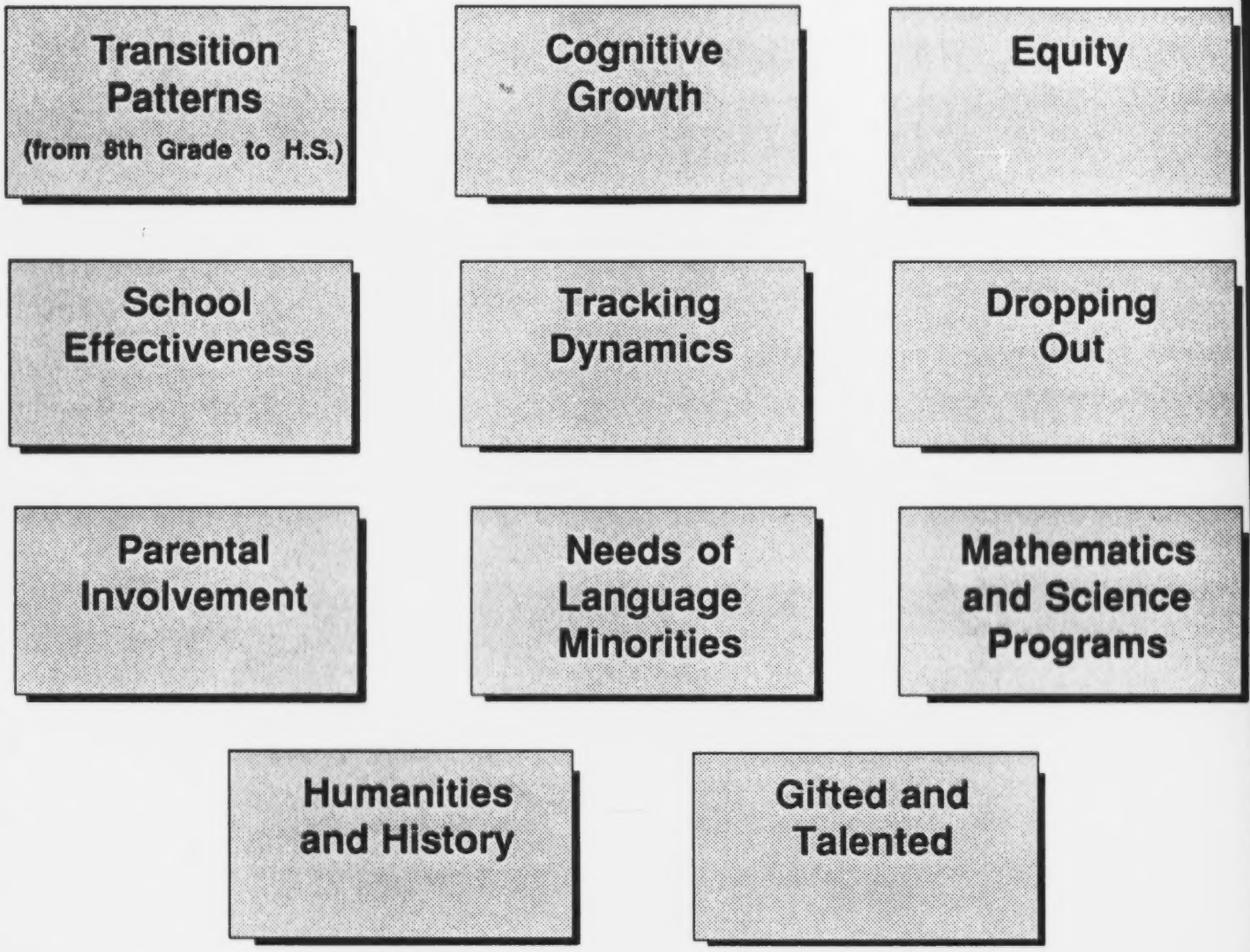
Policy Relevance of NELS:88

A major objective of NELS:88 is to contribute to the development and evaluation of educational policy at all governmental levels. NELS:88 has as one of its aims to inform people (decision makers, principals, teachers, and parents) about changes in the educational system and also to help them understand the effects that aspects of the educational system have on the individuals who pass through it. Although the longitudinal analyses supported by NELS:88 will not be possible for several years, important cross-sectional analyses and descriptive data will be available in the summer of 1989 from the base year survey.

Some of the major policy issues addressed by NELS:88 are presented in Figure 5. This figure presents eleven central policy issues: transition patterns from eighth grade to high school, cognitive growth, equity, school effectiveness, ability groups and tracking dynamics, at-risk students and dropping out, parental involvement in children's education, the needs of language minorities, gifted and talented programs, mathematics and science programs, and humanities and history programs. These major policy issues are

Figure 5

Policy Issues of NELS:88



summarized briefly by posing the following questions which may be addressed by analysts using the NELS:88 data.

Transition Patterns: What are the transition patterns from eighth grade to secondary school?

School Effectiveness: What aspects of school structure and environment are associated with positive student outcomes and school effectiveness? What are the best ways to distinguish effective from ineffective schools?

Dropouts/At Risk Students: What are the correlates of dropping out of school, especially for at-risk youth?

Parental Involvement: What is the parents' role in the educational success of their children? To what extent are parents involved in decision-making regarding the courses and high school plans of their children?

Equity/Access/Choice: Do students from various groups (for example, language minority, handicapped, and at-risk students) and with different characteristics (in terms of racial/ethnic group and socio-economic status) have equal access to and choice of different educational processes. For example, do black students or students from families with low SES have equal access to and choice in terms of the opportunity to learn and to pursue various academic programs?

Cognitive Growth: What are the correlates of cognitive growth over time?

Ability Grouping/Tracking: What are the dynamics of ability grouping and tracking?

Needs of Language Minorities: What are the needs of language minorities and how are they being met by schools?

Mathematics and Science Programs: What is the relationship between the characteristics of learners, their school mathematics and science environment, and actual achievement in those areas?

Humanities and History Programs: What is the relationship between the characteristics of learners, their school humanities and history environment, and actual achievement in those areas?

Gifted and Talented Students: How do gifted and talented students compare with other student groups?

Many of these issues have been addressed with data from local studies. One of the virtues of the NELS:88 study is that it provides data from a national probability sample with which to test the generalizability of findings from these important but smaller, more local studies. Four of these issues (transition patterns, school effectiveness, dropping out, and parent involvement) are discussed in more detail below.

The following research questions relating to these policy-relevant areas

illustrate the kinds of issues that can be addressed through the use of data from the NELS:88 linked student, parent, teacher, and school surveys. Although we have organized the questions under four discreet topics, some of the questions and associated issues cut across topics. Some of the research questions are primarily cross-sectional in nature and can be investigated with the base year data to be released in the summer of 1989. Other questions are primarily longitudinal in scope and can be addressed after the First Follow-up study, preparations for which are now taking place. Many issues that can be addressed cross-sectionally now, can also be investigated over time as new waves of data become available.

A. Transition Patterns

Perhaps the most important policy issues to be addressed by NELS:88 concern the patterns of transition from eighth grades in elementary, middle, and junior high schools to tenth grades in secondary schools. These patterns of transition cover both individual and institutional characteristics. By using the NELS:88 data, researchers will be able to determine how much movement occurs across sectors (public to private or private to public) and whether the transition patterns are predictable. Similarly, researchers will be able to investigate the characteristics of those who change sectors compared with those who remain in the same sector, and the impact of moving from socially homogenous neighborhood schools to heterogeneous consolidated schools.

The NELS:88 data allow the examination of a host of other issues concerning transition patterns as they effect academic performance. For example, researchers will be able to investigate the types of organizational transitions students encounter as they move from elementary, middle, or junior high schools to secondary schools, differences between eighth grade environments and secondary school environments, the effect of change in school size on academic performance, and whether students tend to change track as they change grade or school. Finally, data will be available to assess how, in the

transition from elementary to secondary school, students are assigned to curricular programs and courses and how these assignments affect their academic performance and their future postsecondary education and career choices.

To concretely illustrate how these research questions can be addressed, some items from the student and parent questionnaires that deal with the issue of transition are presented. Students are asked whether they plan to attend a public/private, religious/non-religious high school, whether they think they will graduate from high school, in which high school program they will enroll, and how often they have spoken with various people about planning their high school program. Parents are asked how often they have been contacted by the eighth grade school about the child's high school course selection or program placement and school administrators are asked how placement of the eighth grader in high school level courses is determined and who has the most influence over the placement decision.

B. School Effectiveness

Because the NELS:88 study contains data from students, teachers, and school administrators, it will enable researchers to make a comprehensive assessment of the school-based determinants of educational outcomes. NELS:88 data will allow researchers to address the important policy question of which aspects of school structure and environment are associated with positive student outcomes, as well as with school effectiveness. In this regard, NELS:88 data will allow analysts to investigate the structural and environmental features of effective schools and how to best distinguish effective from ineffective schools. The data will provide information on how the features of effective schools may differ for particular groups of children, for example, assessing the extent to which student body ethnicity and SES level influence student outcomes. In addition, the data will allow the investigation of how such characteristics as the size of the school, the type and affiliation of the school (public/private, religious/non-religious), the school climate and

culture with respect to discipline and teacher collegiality, the size and composition of the faculty and staff, the degree of staff professionalism and of teacher specialization, curricular offerings, amount of time allocated to classroom instruction, and academic orientation singly and together influence school effectiveness.

For example, school administrators, teachers, and students are each asked to give their judgments about the orderliness and safety of the school environment. Administrators are requested to report in detail on the educational climate of the school by addressing such issues as school attendance, teacher morale, the priority students place on learning, and the extent to which discipline is emphasized. Teachers are asked to report on how much time outside regular hours they spend on school-related activities, how much time they spend meeting with other teachers and communicating with parents. Parents are asked to judge the emphasis the school places on learning, the safety of the school environment, and how adequately the school prepares their child for high school. Students are asked to evaluate the discipline level of the school, the quality of teacher-student relations, and the level of school spirit. Students are also asked to report on their tardiness, absenteeism, class-cutting. Teachers report on the amount of homework required and students report on the amount of homework completed.

C. Dropouts and At-Risk Students

An important reason that NELS:88 began with an eighth grade cohort, rather than a tenth grade cohort as in HS&B, is that the evidence shows that many young people drop out of school before tenth grade. NELS:88 allows for earlier identification of students at risk for dropping out of school and for evaluation of various kinds of interventions. The study design facilitates examination of the correlates of persistence in versus dropping out of high school. It is difficult to identify dropouts both because young people move into and out of the status of dropout and because the definition of who is a

"dropout" differs from locality to locality. NELS:88 makes an important contribution to the understanding of dropouts because it is a longitudinal and a national study.

Many important research questions related to the dropout issue can be addressed through the use of NELS:88 data. For example, researchers can prospectively assess which background variables are associated with dropping out and can determine if there are differences in the elementary educational experiences of students who drop out by the tenth grade versus those who drop out later. Similarly, researchers can associate school-level characteristics, such as school climate and policies concerning absenteeism, with persistence in or dropping out of high school. Related to this, NELS:88 data permit an assessment of the extent that students at-risk for dropping out are placed in low ability groups, remedial classes, or vocational programs, and the degree to which that they have equal access to good teaching and opportunities to learn. Finally, the effect of racial/ethnic group membership and of student plans for the future in the dynamics of the decision to leave school by tenth grade on dropping out can also be assessed.

Many of these questions are addressed in the questionnaires. Students are asked various questions about their family and educational backgrounds, including whether they are enrolled in an English language assistance program and if they were held back a year in school. Students also report which ability groups they are placed in for diffferent subjects and whether they attend remedial and vocationally-oriented classes. In addition, students report on the frequency with which they are absent, tardy, cut classes, or get into trouble at school. They also report on their opinions about themselve, their educational and occupational expectations, and their attitudes to particular subject matter, and answer questions about the school disciplinary atmosphere and climate. Parents are asked how many of their other children dropped out of school, whether the eighth grader has any handicaps, and whether

the child is enrolled in any special services (for example, language assistance, special education). Parents are also asked to report whether their child has been considered to have a behavior problem at school and how far in school they expect their child to go. Teachers are asked to provide information on the particular sample of students they teach, including whether the child consistently performs below ability, rarely completes homework, is frequently disruptive, absent, or tardy, has health or handicap problems that affect his or her school work, or is a language minority student. School administrators are asked how many students receive special services, such as reduced-price lunches, bilingual education, job training, and special education. Administrators are also asked to report on school policies regarding the retention of students in their current grade, the availability of counseling for vocations and behavioral problems, and rules for discipline infractions.

D. Parent Involvement in Children's Education

NELS:88 focuses attention on the important role of parents in the educational success of their children. The central role played by the family and the home environment in shaping motivations and reinforcing learning, and in molding habits, skills and aspirations, makes family background information a key element in the analysis of the data.

As mentioned previously, the eighth grade represents an important transition period in which many decisions are made. The role of parents in these transition decisions is an important research concern for which NELS:88 will provide data. Thus, NELS:88 data will enable research to address issues such as the correlates of active parental involvement in their children's schooling and the relationship between school policies and parental involvement. NELS:88 data will also enable researchers to determine differential involvement patterns of parents from differing socio-economic, racial/ethnic, and educational backgrounds in decision-making concerning their

children's academic present and future. The data also provide information on parent-child interactions, addressing such issues as the child's role in decision-making about his or her future, and characteristics of the home educational and disciplinary environment. Another area of interest is the opportunity the parent survey affords for further investigating the changing division of labor between home and school as educative agents. Finally, the effect on educational achievement of such factors as parents' aspirations for their children and parents' willingness (or ability) to commit resources to their children's education may also be assessed.

Many questions bearing on these issues were asked in the Parent Survey. For example, parents are asked whether they go to the library, or attend cultural events with their eighth grader, and whether they have enrolled the child in classes outside the regular school sclasses. Parents were also asked how frequently they have contacted the school for reasons concerning their child's academic performance, and how frequently they have been contacted by the school. Other questions address the parents' participation in parent-teacher organization or as volunteers in the school. Parents were asked about the existence and enforcement of family rules concerning television watching, homework, and maintaining a certain grade point average. Parents and students were both asked how much they talk to each other about the child's current school experiences and about future education and career plans. Students were asked to report on the availability of a parent or some other adult when the student returns home from school each day, and students and parents were both asked to report their aspirations for the student's future. Teachers were asked how much time outside of school hours they spend communicating with parents and how many parents they have spoken with during the school year regarding the children's classroom performance. School administrators were asked how much influence parents have in the assignment and/or selection of high school courses or programs, how often consideration is given to interviews

with partents regarding school admission practices, and whether parental requests are considered in the selection of students for the gifted and talented program.

Conclusion

NELS:88 is an important addition to the family of education longitudinal studies sponsored by the Longitudinal Studies Division of the National Center for Education Statistics. It is a complex, carefully conducted study that provides heretofore unavailable data on important education policy issues. The NELS:88 data will be a valuable resource for those wishing to assess the current state of elementary education in America, study determinants of school tenure and achievement, and propose policies to improve upon current educational practices. Our goal was to introduce many of the useful and novel features of this study and show their potential relevance for educational research.

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